

**Minutes**  
**Board of Directors, Oak Park Temple B'nai Abraham Zion**  
**December 13, 2017**

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסוֹק בְּצַרְכֵי צְבוּר:

*Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech haolam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu la'asok b'tzorchai tzibur.*

Praised are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who sanctifies us through mitzvot and has commanded us to engage in the needs of the community.

**Present:** (17 counted toward quorum at start of meeting, down to 12 at end of meeting): see BoardAttendance.xlsx

**Absent:** Simon, Lebovitz, Hardy, Cicelsky, Cowett, Imowitz, Mandell, Yugend-Green, Sperling Flynn, and Arbetman.

1. **Hanukkah Candle Lighting** in Sanctuary
2. **Moving Choir to Sanctuary** (Julie Yugend-Green; unscheduled discussion)

The Cantor stated that a recurring comment about High Holiday services is that the choir is too remote in the loft, and that an acoustic piano would be much more friendly than an organ. She asked an organ company to assess the organ for potential sale or donation, and they made an offer to purchase it for \$5,000 (less moving costs of \$1,000). Allen Organ Company wants to take possession of the organ immediately. The Board is being asked to vote on the sale of the organ. When asked about the logistics of the plans for the choir and piano, the Cantor proposed moving the choir downstairs, replacing rows of seats along the west side with risers, along with a baby grand piano that is being donated by a congregant. The Worship Committee will handle the details and report to the board at a later date.

Motion: sell organ now.

Moved/Seconded/Approved unanimously

3. **Carpeting** (Brian Hammersley & Danielle Sandler)

Brian walked the board through the community hall to visually inspect the carpeting. Carpeting is old, bunched, and stained, and is becoming a potential danger. The cost to replace the existing carpet with replaceable squares: \$19,000 Social Hall only, \$21,000 Sanctuary &

Bimah, \$5,000 Chapel; \$45,000 for all. Presentation was for Board's information only; no decision yet how to pay for it. No motions pending.

#### **4. Strategic Planning** (Partners in Effective Philanthropy; Laura Kaufman & Cindy Ogrin)

Laura and Cindy walked us through their preliminary assessment of the fundraising and development activity and systems at OPT.

##### **A. Finances** (Laura Kaufman):

Laura recommends we embark on strategic planning over next 2-3 years. A new planning committee will start early 2018. She showed us a dues pyramid comparing FY17 & FY18. Results: big increase in donations over \$3,000; extra \$114,000 raised in just 1 year, 13% greater. Number of dues paying families up 15%.

FY17: 446 total families, \$872,000 pledged.

FY18: 514 total families, \$986,000 pledged

Dues increased 13%, number of families increased 15%.

The Endowment Fund is benefiting from a \$500,000 gift, \$250,000 this year and \$250,000 next year.

Strategic recommendations:

(a) Does revenue model make sense? What percentage of income should come from dues, member services, special events, etc.?

(b) Discontinue Auction & raise \$15,000 another way.

(c) Evaluate whether special events and appeals cut into dues revenue.

(d) Encourage dues support and promote opportunity to pay pledges monthly or quarterly.

(e) Create culture that fundraising is central to mission of OPT.

(f) Invest in staff/lay leadership to succeed in fundraising.

(g) Streamline communications & segment mailing lists.

(h) More transparency in fundraising requests, so members understand the need.

Culture of philanthropy: best practices in fundraising. Fundraising must be core value. Engagement crucial. Everybody on Board must be engaged, including attending services, engaging new/prospective members. 1. Get board to buy into culture of philanthropy. Thank you notes, welcoming; no need for all Board members to ask for money. 2. Tension between inclusion regardless of ability to pay, no special seats for machers, don't equate ability to pay with culture of fundraising; everybody should feel welcome. Used small gifts for Torah work, starting at \$18. Want everybody to get involved.

## **B. Interviews** (Cindy Ogrin)

People feel warm & connected. All criticism has been constructive. Fundraising: need more info. Too many emails. Preschool & religious school are biggest ways to get involved. Average members don't learn everything that OPT does. Gift recognition; no plaques, but a bit more recognition would help. Web site is opportunity to be present in wider Oak Park community; might be good marketing tool.

Communications need streamlining; segmenting mailing list without encumbering office staff. Transparency: people don't feel they know where their money is going. Members being approached by multiple sources; appeals should be coordinated.

Discussion: contradiction between segmenting communications and hearing about other activities outside their preferences. A: Annual meeting is opportunity to read about everything going on. People don't read what we send out. Problematic to suggest exclusive reliance on online communications; paper copies less overwhelming.

Discussion: who was interviewed? A: past board members & officers - didn't talk to newest members but did talk with different generations of membership.

Thought it would take much longer for this campaign including rabbi search, which caught people's imagination.

Next steps - Convene planning process group early 2018. Prioritize next steps.

**5. Rabbi** handed out \$10 Starbucks cards to spend with someone new to congregation. Take out to coffee & schmooze. Report back in Feb 2018.

**6. Minutes** of November 2017: reviewed and approved unanimously.

### **7. Communications** (Lee Kantz and Karen Muriello)

The committee prepared a presentation for changing how we communicate with the community. They talked about the member database, emails, website and the newsletter.

**a. Shulcloud** includes content management for web site, which is now in WordPress. Shulcloud seems to meet our needs, but still evaluating & learning. Want Shulcloud staff to design web site: \$1,500 to redesign web site + \$1,500 to migrate content.

Sandi Pederson would be OPT point person, with editorial oversight by communications committee.

Events can be better calendared than now. Online payments cheaper with Shulcloud & avoids

human mistakes.

**b. Too many emails now.** Propose weekly summary email, with links for greater detail. Major groups like WoOPT and Bagel Boys would have line in weekly email. We've been too liberal in allowing special event emails. Exceptions to weekly emails would be messages from Rabbi and Cantor, death notices, major holidays, religious school, constitutional amendments, and list of nominees

Members control & update their own information in ShulCloud, including email addresses.

**c. Printed Messenger** costs \$5,000/year, net of \$18,000 advertising revenue. Postage alone costs \$4,000.

Changing current system would free a lot of staff time (Sandi Pederson), which will be needed for new assistant Rabbi.

Will not completely phase out printed Messenger. Will mail postcard—asking people to opt-in to continue receiving printed Messenger.

Lee showed a quickly produced sample Messenger that could be printed & mailed out to members who prefer paper, without help from Liturgical Publications. Would be about 2 weeks out of date, like now. It could be included in OPT web site in Adobe Acrobat PDF format for at-home printing; however, the latest news would be online only.

No motion made because no quorum was present at that time - tabled until next meeting.

#### **8. Assistant Rabbi Search Update** (Jenn George)

Completed and submitted application. Posted at CCAR and HUC for newly ordained rabbis. Starting to get resumes. Next week committee will review resumes and work on interview questions. Newly ordained rabbis interviews in Cincinnati in February.

#### **9. Green Chaverim** (Jimmy Korshak)

Jimmy attended the last meeting of the committee. He found them to be a vibrant & passionate group. They are asking the Auction Committee to make the Auction as waste free as possible.

They are working on better communication about which wastebasket to use, the Garden and planting native greens. They talked about AC & LEDs. It was suggested they talk to Building Committee first. They are looking for board members to be more active in that committee.

**10. Greeters** (Shari Schindler)

Friday night greeters are signed up through December but none starting in January. Will email the link again.

**11. Board Orientation** (Shari Schindler)

Shari and Deb Holdstein are working on an agenda for the new orientation. Save the date - February 10, 2018, noon – 2 pm. All present and new members should attend.

Convened 7:00 pm; adjourned 9:20 pm

Approved in board meeting of 1/10/2018

Respectfully submitted  
Alan Fox, Secretary

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